

KANSAS FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT TIPS



October 2017

Kansas Association for Floodplain Management

The Kansas Association for Floodplain Management (KAFM) held its annual conference this year in Lawrence. The conference was on September 6th and 7th. It was good to see friends that we had not seen since the last conference and to make new friends as well.

There were 106 attendees at this year's conference along with 6 exhibitor tables. Eight people received Certified Floodplain Manager pins. There was a preconference workshop on September 5th presented by staff from Division of Water Resources. A review course was held at the end of the workshop with a Certified Floodplain Manager exam on September 8th.

We had speakers from Federal Emergency Management Agency, Division of Water Resources, US Army Corps of Engineers, engineering firms and local community officials. The storm water sessions for the conference expanded this year. Other topics included non-structural flood protection, updates on flood insurance, elevation certificates and local projects in Kansas City and Lawrence.

Conference wasn't all work. There was a social networking event and a corn hole tournament. Free breakfast was provided on Thursday morning. Luncheons were a baked potato bar and taco bar.

The next conference will be in Wichita at the hotel in Old Town on September 5-6, 2018.

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Martin Koch, Mapping Specialist, at the Division of Water Resources display.

Tiny Houses

There are television shows about tiny houses and the idea is growing in popularity. For this reason, there have been questions raised about putting smaller homes in the floodplain. Ignoring any building codes or zoning issues and just considering floodplain regulations, here are things to consider.

A tiny house is still a house. No matter the square footage, it is a residential structure. Every set of floodplain regulations has very clear specific requirements that residential structures be elevated above the base flood elevation (BFE). In most communities that freeboard elevation requirement is one foot but it is two feet in some communities that have adopted higher standards.

A tiny house is also a development in the floodplain. All development must be anchored to prevent flotation, collapse or lateral movement. It has to be attached to a permanent foundation. The argument has come back that the tiny house was delivered on back of a truck so it is just temporary. There is no allowance for a temporary residential structure in your floodplain regulations.

Another issue that has come up is that some tiny houses may be set up in recreational vehicle or camper parks. There are allowances for recreational vehicles that are not elevated and anchored on a foundation to be on site less than 180 days or be fully licensed and ready for highway use. In order for a tiny house to qualify as a recreational vehicle, compare the building to the definition found in most floodplain management regulations. Is the tiny house built on a single chassis, 400 square feet or less when measured at the largest horizontal projections, designed to be self propelled or permanently able to be towed by a light duty truck and designed primarily not for use as a permanent dwelling but as a temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, travel or seasonal use? Any tiny house that can meet that definition could be considered to be a recreational vehicle and allowed to meet the recreational vehicle requirements for floodplain management.

There has also been some confusion about tiny houses being called accessory structures because they were placed on a property that already had a larger primary structure. There have also been cases of someone who purchased a shed from a lumberyard, had it delivered and then moved in to it and turned it in to a house. To be very clear about this, when people will be living and sleeping in the structure then it is a residence and it is not to be considered a shed or an accessory structure. The tiny house must meet all of the same requirements of any other larger house. A house is a house and the size does not matter.



Photo of tiny house in a recreational vehicle park

Stay out of the Water

Many people who read Floodplain Management Tips know Steve Samuelson, National Flood Insurance Program Specialist with the Division of Water Resources. Steve's mother, Susie Bonds, was working as an Elementary School Counselor in Emporia in April of 1993. Susie and her husband, Tom Bonds, lived in Americus. From work to home was about a 15 minute commute for Susie heading west and north out of Emporia and crossing the Neosho River floodplain.

Tom and Susie had lunch together in Emporia that day. Susie went back to work and Tom headed to Americus. A few miles south of Americus there was water going over the road. Tom drove in to the water. Tom came through the water alright and arrived home safely.

Susie left work a few hours later and she also headed for Americus. She arrived at the location where water was going over the road. Susie stopped her car, went to a phone and called Tom. She told Tom there was water over the road and she was going to take the long detour getting home and would be a little late getting there.

Tom told Susie he had driven through the water and had no trouble and that she should go ahead and drive through the water. What Tom did not realize was that the water levels had risen in the time since he had driven through it. The water was deeper and moving faster by time Susie got there. Susie followed Tom's advice and drove her car in to the water. The car floated off the road.

Susie Bonds was rescued that day and is alive and well and living in Emporia. In too many cases, stories like this one often have a much different ending. The great majority of Kansas flood deaths happen in cars and trucks. People insist on driving in to the water. The solution is very simple. Stay out of the water.

One foot of water can displace 1,500 pounds of weight. That would be enough to float a small car. Two feet of water will carry most vehicles away. Six inches of moving water can sweep a person off of their feet. Water can be deeper than it looks or a road surface under the water could already have been eroded away. The simplest easiest way to stay safe is to stay out of the water.

Some people seem to think it is alright to drive through water or they drove through water before and didn't have an issue. Some people seem to think their car is a multi-function vehicle and can operate as a boat. Please take the pop quiz at the bottom of this page.



Pop Quiz Question: Which picture is a photo of a boat and which one is a truck?

Pop Quiz Answer: Stay out of the water.

Training Opportunities

The Floodplain Management Program will host the following training sessions throughout Kansas. If you are interested in any of the no-cost training opportunities, please contact Tom Morey at 785-296-5440 or Steve Samuelson at 785-296-4622. A training registration form is in this newsletter.

Post Flood Responsibilities

This free class is intended for community officials responsible for administering floodplain management regulations. The course focuses on what to do during and after a disaster event. Topics include substantial damage, permitting, Increased Cost of Compliance and violations. Allowed 3.5 hours for certified floodplain managers. Limited to 20 participants.

- El Dorado – Oct. 31, 2017 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Violations and Enforcement in Floodplain

This free class is intended for community officials responsible for enforcing floodplain management regulations. The course will focus on various types of violations, how to correct violations and enforcement procedures. Allowed 3.5 hours toward CFM. Limited to 20 participants.

- Humboldt– Dec. 14, 2017 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Elevation Certificates and Letters of Map Amendment

This free class is designed for community officials responsible for administering floodplain management as well as surveyors and engineers who complete Letters Of Map Amendment (LOMA) and Elevation Certificate forms. The course will focus on accurate completion of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) technical forms, building diagrams and base flood elevation. Approved 3.5 hours toward CFM. Limited to 20 participants.

- Wichita– November 16, 2017 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Find more information about floodplain management from Kansas Department of Agriculture
Division of Water Resources on line at:
<http://agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/dwr/floodplain>

Email saves money on postage. The electronic newsletter also has links and the photos are in color. If you are getting this newsletter by postal mail and would prefer email please contact Steve Samuelson at steve.samuelson@ks.gov.

Mark your calendar. The Kansas Association for Floodplain Management 2018 conference will be September 5 and 6 in Wichita. More information will be posted at the website: www.kafm.org. Registration will be done through a link on the website. If you have questions about registration please contact Don Slone, Chairman, at 913-667-1708.

Kansas Department of Agriculture
Division of Water Resources
Floodplain Program
Training Registration Form

Name _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Name, date and location of training you will attend _____

*Please share this invitation with anyone else who could benefit from the training.

**Classroom locations will be sent to registered participants one week before the training.

Please mail or fax your registration to:

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
6531 SE Forbes Ave., Suite B
TOPEKA, KS 66619
Fax to: 785-296-8298

For questions about training, please contact Steve Samuelson by email at steve.samuelson@ks.gov or by phone 785-296-4622, or contact Tom Morey at tom.morey@ks.gov and 785-296-5440.

Please help us keep our records current. If the name that appears on this newsletter is for an individual no longer with your organization, please call 785-296-4622, or email steve.samuelson@ks.gov to report the change.

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Kansas Department of Agriculture
Division of Water Resources
Topeka Field Office
Floodplain Management
6531 SE Forbes Ave., Suite B
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ASFPM 2018 National Conference in Phoenix

The 2018 Association of State Floodplain Managers National Conference will be June 17-22, 2018 in Phoenix, Arizona. This conference is an excellent opportunity for floodplain managers to receive training on mapping technologies, regulations, permitting, outreach and best practices. It is estimated the conference will be attended by more than 1,000 floodplain management professionals. This conference is great chance to meet people for networking and to learn the latest news in floodplain management.

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